

EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

Epiphany means "manifestation"; It comes from Greek roots that mean "to show, to display." So an epiphany is when something is shown, displayed, or manifested to an audience. We celebrate Epiphany as Jesus being made manifest to non-Jewish people.

FUN FACTS

How many wise men were there?

Answer: We don't know! We know there were three gifts mentioned, but any number of visitors could have brought them.

In the middle ages commentators proposed a wide assortment of names suggested for the Magi/kings, those that eventually prevailed were **Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar**. But the names were never consistently assigned to a particular king.



SEEDS FOR CONVERSATION

- Why do you think the Magi came with gifts?
- What was the Magi's reaction when they had found the Christ child? What did they give to him?
- What did worshipping Jesus involve for the Magi? [*consider their long journey, the preliminary study, and the expense of their offerings, as well as what they actually do in this reading.*]
- How is the way we worship like that, or different?
- Why was there such a difference in the way the Magi reacted to the news of a new king, and the way Herod reacted?

The three gifts had a spiritual meaning: **gold** as a symbol of kingship on earth, **frankincense** (an incense) as a symbol of deity, and **myrrh** (an embalming oil) as a symbol of death.



Rejoice



BLESS YOUR HOME!

An Epiphany House Blessing is traditionally done each year on this holy day. Sunday or January 6 (true Epiphany) is just fine. The front door of the house (either inside, outside or both) is prayerfully marked with blessed chalk. The prayer (and blessed chalk) can be picked up at the doors of the church this week.

20 + C + B + M + 22

HAVE A SPECIAL MEAL

While there are specific foods eaten in various countries for the Epiphany, one fun approach is to simply add some "exotic" foods in honor of the magi who came "from the east". Starting with a stir-fry or curry would make sense, but include some items from the "International" section of the store that you've never had.



MAKE A WINDOW DISPLAY!

All you need is tissue paper, a pair of scissors, and a 3 x 5 index card (or a ruler). A few easy folds turn each piece of tissue paper into one-eighth of the star, and a few dots of glue bring them together. Find directions by searching for Bela Luna

Don't forget to make a **KING CAKE!** (Or just about any dessert, actually.) Find that baby Jesus you received in your Crate last year, or use any tiny baby figurine, and hide it in a dessert. (Even a bean will work.) Everyone can *seek the baby Jesus!* (Maybe even plan a prize for the winner - release from a chore or slightly later bedtime...whatever would be fun.)



WHY DO THIS "LIGHTWEIGHT" STUFF?

Foods, games, crafts, traditions such as writing on your wall.... These are not comparable to sitting down and having a Bible study. These are not the same as going to Mass, or Confession. BUT, "fun" traditions help strengthen families and create lasting memories. And, those memories are associated with (and help us all connect to) the aspects of our faith that really *are* important. Faith-based traditions at home help confirm what our family stands for, what is worth celebrating... In addition, for children, they can be important "hands-on" learning experiences.

A bit about

Epiphany



The Epiphany is the manifestation of Jesus as Son of God and Savior of the world. This great feast celebrates the adoration of Jesus by the wise men (magi) from the East. The signs that led the magi to Jerusalem to pay homage to the king of the Jews show that Jesus came to be king of all nations. Their coming means that everyone (not just Jews) can discover Jesus and worship him as Son of God and Savior of the world.

Before early church leaders in Rome decided on a date to celebrate Christ's birth, the most important Christian holidays were the Epiphany and Easter. Though the exact date that Christ was born is unknown, by the third century, the Church decreed that His birth would be celebrated December 25. The first mention of the holiday in a calendar was in 336 AD. The 25th of December fit well within the culture of the day, offering new believers a replacement for the popular pagan celebration of winter solstice. The twelve day span is reminiscent of other ancient European holidays like Yule, that helped people stay cheery through the long cold winter nights. In 567 the Council of Tours proclaimed that the entire period between Christmas and Epiphany should be considered part of the celebration, creating what became known as the twelve days of Christmas, or what the English called **Christmastide**.

The Adoration of the Magi or Three Kings has always been a popular topic in Art. It can be found in many forms throughout history. In Byzantine art the Three Kings are depicted as Persians, wearing trousers and Phrygian caps; crowns appear only after the 10th century. Medieval artists made an allegory to represent the three ages of man (youth, middle age, old) and beginning in the 12th century, the Kings are seen to represent the three parts of the known world – one represented as a young African and another with Oriental features.



Is the Bible Indicating that Astrology is OK?

Nope! According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church...practices falsely supposed to “unveil” the future, consulting horoscopes, astrology . . . contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone [CCC 2116].

God may have arranged for certain signs to attend the birth of his Son, but this is the opposite of what astrology involves, Pope Benedict explained: The Fathers have emphasized a further aspect. Gregory Nazianzen says that at the very moment when the Magi adored Jesus, astrology came to an end, as the stars from then on traced the orbit determined by Christ.

In the ancient world, the planets were regarded as divine powers, determining men's fate. (The planets still bear the names of these gods.) According to the concept prevailing at the time, they somehow ruled over the world. Some new believers were forced to struggle with the question of the “power” of the stars and planets. In the letters he wrote from prison to the Ephesians and the Colossians, Paul emphasizes that the risen Christ has conquered all the powers and forces in the heavens, and that he reigns over the entire universe.

In the Orthodox Church **Epiphany** is known by a more specific term: **Theophany** - a manifestation of God to man.

Twelfth Night is a term which was used during the middle ages to refer to Epiphany night. It is the night of the Twelfth Day of Christmas.

GROWING CATHOLICS

Leaflet 

The Epiphany of the Lord

Sunday Gospel • January 2, 2022 Matthew 2: 1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

